

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-50 (canceled).

51 (currently amended): A method of diagnosing lung damage in a mammal, ~~wherein the mammal is asymptomatic to lung damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of lung damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures,~~ said method comprising screening for an increase in the levels of SP-B in a body fluid of said mammal relative to a normal reference level, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to lung damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of lung damage in said mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.

52 (previously presented): The method of claim 51, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to lung damage.

53 (previously presented): The method of claim 51, wherein the clinical diagnosis of lung damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.

54 (previously presented): The method of claim 51, wherein said body fluid is blood.

55 (previously presented): The method of claim 52, wherein said body fluid is blood.

56 (previously presented): The method of claim 53, wherein said body fluid is blood.

57 (currently amended): A method of diagnosing alveolo-capillary membrane damage in a mammal, ~~wherein the mammal is asymptomatic to alveolo-capillary membrane damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of alveolo-capillary membrane damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures~~, said method comprising screening for an increase in the levels of SP-B in a body fluid of said mammal relative to a normal reference level, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to alveolo-capillary membrane damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of alveolo-capillary membrane damage in said mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.

58 (previously presented): The method of claim 57, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to alveolo-capillary membrane damage.

59 (previously presented): The method of claim 57, wherein the clinical diagnosis of alveolo-capillary membrane damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.

60 (previously presented): The method of claim 57, wherein said body fluid is blood.

61 (previously presented): The method of claim 58, wherein said body fluid is blood.

62 (previously presented): The method of claim 59, wherein said body fluid is blood.

63 (previously presented): The method of claim 51, wherein the mammal is a human.

64 (previously presented): The method of claim 57, wherein the mammal is a human.